

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Gold King Mine Spill - Region 6 - Removal Polrep  
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region VI

**Subject: POLREP #1**  
**Gold King Mine Spill - Region 6**

**Various New Mexico locations., NM**  
**Latitude: 36.8374600 Longitude: -107.9916800**

**From: Ronnie Crossland**  
**Date: 8/8/2015**  
**Reporting Period:**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Description of Threat**

Region 8 reported approximately one million gallons of mine waste water was released into Cement Creek and the Animas River. The primary environmental concern is the pulse of contaminated water containing sediment and metals flowing as an orange-colored discharge downstream through Durango, Colorado, and into New Mexico and Utah.

## **1.2 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results**

Water sampling is ongoing (analytical results are pending), and pH levels and other water quality parameters are being monitored.

## **2. Current Activities**

### **2.1 Operations Section**

Region 8 reports that water continues to be released from the mine at a slower rate. Region 8 is using a retention pond to facilitate treating the effluent before release to receiving waters.

The EPA ASPECT aircraft reported that the leading edge of the plume was observed just inside the New Mexico border at 1515 MDT on August 7. ASPECT will continue to conduct overflights to track the movement of the plume.

To ensure pre-impact samples were collected, EPA Region 6 requested EPA Region 8 collect samples in New Mexico on August 6, 2015. As a result, Region 8 collected two pre-impact samples the evening of August 6. The samples were taken on the Animas River, at the first accessible location south of the Colorado/New Mexico border and at the northern most drinking water intake for the city of Aztec, sample results are pending.

NMED coordinated with some of their drinking water system operators in the towns of Aztec and Farmington, NM to collect water samples at their intakes. EPA took custody of the samples for laboratory analysis with results pending. NMED plans to have their water system operators take frequent pH readings near the intakes.

NMED is working with the effected water systems to determine current storage capacity and the potential for assisting with future water availability concerns in advance of the arrival of the leading edge of the plume.

On the evening of August 6, 2015, Region 6 mobilized 2 START contractors from removal site in Grants, New Mexico, to Farmington, NM to have them on the ground to initiate sampling early morning August 7. These 2 START personnel will demobilize at end of the day August 7.

The morning of August 7, 2015, Region 6 deployed an OSC and additional START from Dallas, to New Mexico. They are arrived in Farmington the afternoon of August 7. Two additional START contractors will mobilize to Farmington on August 8. These personnel will form 2 Strike Teams who will continue sampling of the New Mexico reaches of the Animas River and the San Juan River just south of its confluence with the Animas. An additional Strike Team is being mobilized to assist with sampling activities.

There are a total of 8 drinking water intakes for 5 drinking water systems. One intake previously considered was discovered to be inactive. EPA will collect samples at each location daily. The Region 6 strategy is to collect water samples from the southernmost intake in Farmington to the northernmost intake in Aztec. Samples will be analyzed for metals, mercury and staff will also

take field pH readings. This matches the sampling activities of Region 8 and Region 9.

On August 7, Region 6 sampling teams collected samples from 4 water intake locations. These samples are being shipped to a TestAmerica laboratory for analysis. EPA Regions 6, 8 and 9 are coordinating on laboratory selection.

The On-Scene Coordinator in the field participated in a Community meeting in Farmington NM at 1 pm CDT (12 pm MDT). A Staff member from the Office of Public Affairs will be en-route to NM August 8 to handle press and community interactions.

Coordination discussions between the three Regions are addressing consistent; reporting, sampling and analytical methodology, data management; messaging.

Region 6 is coordinating water sample locations with NMED. Water Quality Division is gathering baseline and historical water quality data to aid decision making.

Region 9 is working with the Navajo Nation in New Mexico to sample the San Juan River in Navajo Country.

The State of New Mexico has issued a general advisory to all water users for the Animas River.

Region 6 will continue to coordinate with EPA regions 8 and 9, NMED and other federal agencies such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and USGS.

### 3. Participating Entities

US EPA  
NMED

### 4. Personnel On Site

<b>Gold King Mine Blowout 2015</b>	
<b>Group</b>	<b>Number</b>
Region 6 EPA @ REOC	10
Region 6 Contractors @ REOC	2
Region 6 EPA in Field (R6)	1
Region 6 Contractors in Field	6

### 5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

### 6. Additional sources of information

No information available at this time.

### 7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.